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ABSTRACT

This guide, addressed to policymakers, describes specific programs to support the educational role of the family. Based on demonstrated research, it lays out low-cost methods to enhance the impact of schooling by involving the family. Following an executive summary, the volume presents six main sections, with recommendations for addressing the following questions: (1) Why is family involvement important?; (2) What do people want from schools?; (3) What new directions should government take?; (4) What can be done?; (5) How can policy be put into practice?; and (6) What family demographics affect schools? A final section lists additional resources, and an appendix presents sample home learning activities. (KH)

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The Forgotten Factor in School Success

The Family

A Policymaker's Guide

by Dorothy Rich

Providing support for education without providing ways to involve families is a partial cure. It's like taking half a penicillin dose to cure an illness. It may start to work, but it won't be able to do the complete job.

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The *Forgotten Factor* in School Success

The Family

A Policymaker's Guide

Dorothy Rich

The relationship between family and school is comparable to that of the right and left hemispheres of the brain. Both are necessary. Both are complementary, non-duplicating, unique and vital.

This guide was produced with the support of The Field Foundation and the Yale University Bush Center in Child Development and Social Policy.

The Home and School Institute Inc.

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Dr. Dorothy Rich is the founder and president of the Home and School Institute. She developed the Success for Children and Families Learning Together parent programs and the School and Family-Community Involvement training workshops for professionals. She has written 11 books based on Institute programs and has received four education writing awards. In state and federal demonstration programs nationally, her methods have been tested with success for different populations, including senior citizens and special education and bilingual youngsters.

Dr. Rich's accomplishments have been noted in the Congressional Record and in Megatrends, and she was named a 1983 Washingtonian of the Year. Dr. Rich also is designing the Careers and Caring program for employers. These parent information materials will be provided to employees to help them reduce the stress of competing demands of work and family life, and to help children to do well at school while their parents do well on the job.

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THE FORGOTTEN FACTOR IN SCHOOL SUCCESS—THE FAMILY

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ABOUT THE FORGOTTEN FACTOR IN SCHOOL SUCCESS THE FAMILY

The guide defines policies and programs that help families contribute to and support educational excellence. It presents ways to mobilize schools and families to work together in educational partnerships. These strategies are designed for educational leaders, policymakers, staff and constituents...all who are concerned with the role of policy in enhancing the nation's education programs.

Content has been selected for this guide based on four major goals for policy and program action.

To help policymakers:

- 1) Increase awareness of what can be done to recognize and build upon the strengths of the family in reinforcing and expanding upon the work of the school.
- 2) Coalesce efforts of families and teachers in support of children's education.
- 3) Help move from fragmentary "one-shot" efforts to a more systematic, long-range approach by schools to support the educational role of the family.
- 4) Foster a sense of the community commonweal in support of schooling and the achievement of all children.

THE FORGOTTEN FACTOR IN SCHOOL SUCCESS—THE FAMILY
A Policymaker's Guide

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: Making New Choices About Families and Schools

The major education reports of the past few years paid little or no attention to a major educational institution, the family.

The problems facing American education are not problems of the school alone. To be resolved successfully, they must address the relationship of the home and the school.

This guide describes for policymakers specific programs to support the educational role of the family. Based on demonstrated research, it lays out practical low cost methods to enhance the impact of schooling by involving the family.

CLOSING THE GAP BETWEEN RHETORIC AND ACTION

It is instinctively understood that family involvement * in education is important. As a concept it is greatly praised. However, there is a continuing gap between the rhetoric of parent involvement and its translation into practice.

- . While a great deal is already known about the importance of the family in the education of children, little use has been made of those research findings.
- . Schools have not adapted sufficiently to meet the needs of today's families; and teachers have received little, if any, help and training in working with families.
- . Community groups and individuals, other than parents, have had little involvement in the education of children.

* "Family" involvement and "parent" involvement are used interchangeably in this guide.

- . Families have not taken or been asked to take sufficient responsibility in their role as partners with the school in the education of their children.

The current thrust for education reform, including the report of the National Commission on Excellence in Education, centers almost exclusively on the school. The report addresses parents only in a postscript: "As surely as you are your children's most important teachers, your children's ideas about education and its significance begin with you. Moreover, you bear a responsibility to participate actively in your children's education."¹

These are good words. But what is included in that responsibility? What is expected of schools in working with parents? What is expected of parents?

The 1984 State Legislative Summary of Children and Youth Issues identified over 600 different bills affecting children and youth.² These were enacted by states in a single year. Clearly, policymakers are seeking ways to support and strengthen the family. Many of these laws affect children's education. They could have included measures to promote family involvement. But in most cases, they did not.

Reform activities and initiatives, summarized in 1985 by Education Week, include such traditional topics as career ladders and competency tests for teachers, higher graduation requirements, and limitations on extra curriculums for students. No state identified family/school involvement as a strategy to be used to address educational issues.³

Two reasons may account for this startling "parent gap" in the legislation of the education reform movement:

- 1) Lack of information. There really is a lack of knowledge about the research and experience which point to the significance of the family in the education of children.
- 2) Fear of potential conflicts between the respective rights of governments, parents and the schools. Perhaps the hesitancy to address this issue ties in with the questions about the new role of women at home or in the workplace. Perhaps it ties in with unresolved questions about the role of the school and the role of the home.

This gap can be bridged using the strategies outlined in this guide.

FIVE QUESTIONS

The handbook addresses five major questions. Brief answers to each follow. Supporting details are found in the text.

What Problems Can Family Involvement Solve?

Family involvement programs address major school problems. Among them are: disappointing student academic achievement; poor work behaviors and attitudes of students; and breakdown of the relationship between home and school.

Evidence outlined in Section I indicates that parent involvement:

- . Raises the academic achievement of students;
- . Improves attitudes and performance of children in school;
- . Helps parents understand the work of the schools;
- . Enables parents and children to communicate more and show their caring toward each other; and
- . Builds school-community relationships in an ongoing, problem-preventing way.

This does not happen immediately. While not everything is yet known about family involvement, enough is now known about its benefits. Action needs to be taken to begin integrating family involvement in all school subjects and all school years.

Why Is Involving Families So Important Now?

An urgent need today is to find ways to deal constructively with the fact that the majority of mothers are in the workforce and a growing number of children are living in single parent homes.

Many education issues today deal with families and with parent needs. These cut across all grade levels and include such topics as: schooling for 4-year-olds, care for latchkey children, tuition tax credits, vouchers, home schooling, student achievement, magnet schools, private schooling, and high school dropouts.

Family demographics affect the work of the school. Section VI presents current research on the impact of employed mothers and single parent households on student achievement. While not all answers or even all questions are yet known, enough is now known to support changes for schools to have programs and policies that work effectively with today's families.

What Does Good Family Involvement Look Like?

The traditional form of family involvement of the last two decades has been the Advisory Council with families in an advisory capacity, as in PAC's. Good or effective family involvement appropriate for today's families is different. The advisory role, while it may have been a relevant and useful model at the time it was designed, is no longer the most appropriate involve- 7

ment method. This is due to changes in family life and to the findings of educational research.

Effective involvement today needs to be based on a non-deficit view of families. More traditionally, families have been identified by deficits, with the school in a compensatory role. The position of this guide, based on experience with thousands of families, is that there are strengths in every family that can be mobilized into effective educational action. Good involvement provides learning strategies for families to use at home. These reinforce but do not duplicate the school. It uses the school, community agencies, and businesses to "deliver support" to families in their important role in the education of their children.

What Can Schools Do?

Schools must be ready to care about adults as well as children. Schools must begin to include parent involvement as a legitimate, integral part of its programs, recognizing that successful teaching of reading and math involves families. This means people, materials, and programs to enlist families as educational partners. Reaching the family must be considered as important as reaching the child. This means change from past practices which have tended to isolate schools from the community.

For public schools to attract and keep families (who have a choice as to which school to send their children), schools must show that they care about parents. A difference between public and private schools, some say, is that private schools respond more to parent needs, with more individualized attention to student and family.

This guide provides specific recommendations with examples for action. Among them are: the use of home education activities that employ the unique resources of the home to expand the work of the school; ways to provide teachers with training and information to help them work well with families; the use of school facilities for community needs; emphasis on early prevention of learning problems by reaching parents at local businesses, hospitals, and community agencies; involvement of senior citizens and non-parents in school-related activities; the connection of parent/school programs with organizations such as Parents Without Partners and American Association of Retired Persons.

What Can Policymakers Do?

The Partnership for Excellence Design outlined in Section V includes: An Information Campaign on the Importance of Parents as Educators; Establishment of a Parent Educational Delivery System; and systematic programs of Home Learning Activities For Families and Others To Use With Children. A list of basic tasks and a projection of costs are provided. Starting modestly, it is possible to launch an effort at the state level for \$75,000. At the school system level, it is possible to launch this design for \$40,000, which provides a number of schools with direct services.

A 20 Question Checklist to help policymakers frame family-school initiatives has been specifically designed for this guide (Section III). This Checklist is useful in evaluating potential policies and programs to assess their "family factor" orientation.

Emphasis on the role of parents as educators may take some public re-education. Generally speaking, the public has been accustomed to a school-community relations approach, more of a public relations effort rather than an educational sharing effort. Also, the public may confuse this new campaign with home-schooling, but not if policymakers are aware of these concerns in advance. (See Points to Focus On below.)

The material in this guide prepares policymakers to take the strategic leadership position in family-school involvement: holding hearings, evaluating programs and policies, organizing allies, and gaining and holding media attention.

POINTS TO FOCUS ON: Distinctive Themes of This Guide

The key is to recognize the family--every family--as a system for teaching and learning. Surveys indicate public concern and readiness to get involved. Data such as the numbers of children in poverty and numbers of single parents can seem almost unmanageable. The message and the programs in this guide, based on research and experience, show that there are practical, effective strategies that can be used to address these conditions.

Political Feasibility

The basic tenet of the family-as-educator approach outlined in this guide crosses ideological lines. These programs provide non-controversial approaches to issues that were often avoided because of potential controversy. This approach offers policymakers a viable middle ground on school-family issues, presenting new premises from which constructive public debate can follow.

Importance of Student Attitudes Brought from Home

Schooling reforms for the late 80's and 90's, to be really effective, must focus on the attitudes students bring into school from home. A student's attitudes and self-esteem are key determiners of achievement. Schools depend on the "input" from the home--particularly the attitudes and the motivation that children bring to the classroom. However, the majority of schools have not yet worked with the home in sustained, systematic ways.

Different Roles for Teacher and Parent

The parent involvement approach recommended by this guide is the involvement of the home that extends the work of the school. It is based on the different strengths of the home and the classroom.

The roles of parents and teachers are different--they are different but they are complementary. The family is in the ideal position to prepare for, expand, and extend the work of the school. To use the family only to duplicate the school does not take advantage of the family's significant educational role. There is traditional homework, but there is also the opportunity for families to engage in individualized give-and-take with students at "teachable moments" that teachers can only dream about.

"Home-Schooling" and Family Involvement

The family-as-educator role differs from "home schooling." Family involvement in this guide refers to the more informal but strong role parents play in preparing children for school and in reinforcing and expanding the work of the school through learning experiences at home.

Home schooling refers to the taking over by the family of the children's schooling in place of sending the youngsters to school. While there is some public interest in home schooling, the vast majority of children will continue to go outside their own homes for formal schooling.

"School-Community Relations" and Family Involvement

School-community relations, as more traditionally defined, is based on public relations and building of goodwill towards the school. This should not be confused with the parent involvement approach defined in this guide which is intimately connected with the academic goals of the schools. This involvement is grounded in the research that supports the educational role of the family. An added bonus is that it builds excellent public relations for schools from a solid base of parent support.

Four Rules for Involvement Programs

1. Link parents' involvement directly to the learning of their own children. An important reward for parents is their children's school success.
2. Provide ways for families to reinforce academic skills at home. Easy home learning techniques foster learning: young children use the TV schedule to keep to time limits, and dial and read telephone numbers; older students make "best buy" purchases at the grocery store and use maps to plan family trips.
3. Link the school's work to the community. Schools must share the responsibility of education. Home learning activities can be distributed at workplaces, churches, gas stations, and grocery stores. They can be provided in adaptations for bilingual and special education students. The wider public, including senior citizens, need to participate.

4. Provide for parent involvement at all levels of schooling.

Research and parent programs have primarily centered on early childhood, but continuing support is needed as children move through school. Teens need help from home to get the best from the secondary years.

Parent involvement deserves consistent backing in the same way that the teaching of reading deserves consistent backing.

CURRENT MOMENTUM AND OPPORTUNITY

School and family responsibilities are increasing and will increase even more in the near future. Before 1990, there will be more young children in school and more mothers in the workplace. For more students to succeed, it is vital to enable families to have greater positive impact on children's schooling. There is today a convergence of forces and needs about families and schools:

- . Teachers are realizing more than ever that they must work in partnership with parents and the community.
- . A growing research base is affirming the impact of families as educators of their children.
- . Today's parents are more schooled than ever before, making it more possible for families to help their children.
- . There is strong interest in this country in self-help initiatives rather than in waiting for government and institutions to take care of individual needs.

The family may look different today but parents continue to care about their children. Teachers care about the achievement of their students. Both have more abilities and potential to do a more successful job than ever before.

These are the strengths that policymakers can build upon.

ABOUT THE HOME AND SCHOOL INSTITUTE

The Home and School Institute (HSI), a nonprofit educational organization based in Washington, D.C., works to link the resources of the school, the home and the community for student academic achievement and school success.

Since 1964 HSI has developed an innovative approach to community involvement in education by providing a structured tutoring role for the family which complements but does not duplicate the work of the school.

The HSI approach recognizes the critical role that all citizens play in education of children and taps the educational strengths of the community.

HSI initiated national conferences on Single Parent Families and the Schools (1983), Working Parents and Achieving Children (1984) and The Family and Educational Excellence: Issues for Policymakers, co-sponsored with George Washington University (1985). In 1984, HSI developed for the National Education Association the Teacher-Parent Partnership Project which is being expanded by NEA in 1985.

Section I

WHY IS FAMILY INVOLVEMENT IMPORTANT?

The relationship between family and school is comparable to that of the right and left hemispheres of the brain. Both are necessary. Both are complementary, non-duplicating, unique and vital. This is the home-school partnership, ideally envisioned.

This section is designed to provide the information base towards the fulfillment of this ideal. A number of studies (outlined below) of the last two decades provide an information base about the strategic educational function of the family and the specific roles the family can play.

INCREASED STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

The large-scale Coleman Report for the U.S. Office of Education found the correlation between achievement and family background stronger than the correlation between achievement and "school quality."⁴ This report was widely interpreted to mean that "schools don't count; it's the family that counts." This is an oversimplification, but the report did help to underscore that what children bring to school--background and environment--is critically important in the learning process.

The study, Parent Involvement in Compensatory Education Programs assessed the major models of parent involvement that evolved in the 1960's and found in general that the evidence supported participation of "parents-as-tutors" of their children.⁵

In another study, Parents as Teachers of Young Children, the authors state: "As a group, the programs involving parents as teachers consistently produced significant immediate gains in children's IQ scores, and seemed to alter in a positive direction the teaching behavior of parents."⁶

Urie Bronfenbrenner, reviewing a variety of intervention programs, concluded that the active involvement of the family is critical to children's school success. It reinforces and helps sustain the effects of school programs.⁷

In his study of a large Midwestern school system, Theodore Wagenaar determined that there was a connection between schoolwide achievement and the level of community involvement and support.⁸

Ira Gordon, researching the Follow Through Program, concluded that all forms of parent involvement help, but that the more comprehensive the involvement--that is, the more roles there are in a school for parents to play--and the longer it lasts, the more effective it will be.⁹

In Joyce Epstein's study in Maryland, preliminary results indicated that students whose teachers were leaders in parent involvement made greater gains in reading achievement than did other students. Similar gains in math achievement were not found. Epstein explains these results by the fact that the most popular parent involvement practices are reading activities.¹⁰

Use of Home Learning Activities

Home learning activities have been a core component in all Home and School Institute (HSI) programs for families for two decades. They provide a structured tutoring role for the family that deliberately does not duplicate the work of the school. The activities are not traditional schoolwork. They teach the basic motivation, skills, and attitudes children need to do well in school, such as improving self-discipline, study habits, and building children's self-esteem.

Test score gains which have emerged from HSI short-term projects provide strong indicators of what may be found in longitudinal studies.

After using eight HSI home learning activities, first grade children scored significantly higher on standardized reading tests than the control group.¹¹

In Project HELP, children, who in the beginning had the lowest scores of all groups studied, after a program of HSI learning activities sent home weekly, made gains in reading equal to those of the other groups who started out at higher levels.¹²

Using the HSI model in special education in the inner city, a highly significant increase was found in children's reasoning skills as well as an increase of over three grade levels in visual-aural skills. The majority of special education youngsters who participated in the project are now mainstreamed into regular classrooms.¹³

Compared to other programs in education, there have been very few in parent involvement. More data are needed to document even more clearly what works consistently for which students, for what skills, at what grades.

IMPROVED STUDENT BEHAVIOR

Epstein's research suggests that there are important consequences for student achievement, attitudes, and behavior that occur when teachers make parent involvement part of their regular teaching practices. Students reported that they have more positive attitudes toward school, more regular homework habits, that the teacher knows the family, and that they are assigned more homework on weekends.¹⁴

In a recent survey by Collins of home-school partnership programs in the upper elementary and secondary schools in 24 large American cities, 28 programs improved the school performance and social development of children. The survey reported reduced absenteeism, higher achievement scores, improved student behavior, and restored confidence and participation among parents.¹⁵

FAMILY ACCEPTANCE

Although behaviors and roles of a tutorial nature have been most commonly associated with educated parents and middle-class lifestyles, R.J. Dave found that research and the experience of many programs working with disadvantaged and minority families confirm that educational attainment of the parent need not be a barrier to assuming the tutorial role.¹⁶

HSI field experience indicates that family concern for education can be readily translated into practical support for children and for schools. HSI projects have served low socio-economic families in the District of Columbia, Michigan, Maryland, California, South Carolina, and Virginia as well as special education and multilingual populations. Family participation in three of these programs is briefly summarized below:

- . Project AHEAD, developed for the Southern Christian Leadership Conference West, serves 5000 children, primarily black and Hispanic, in grades K-3 with a parent-to-parent approach. Results show significant increases in scores in second and third grade CTBS tests. 97% of the parents indicated they wanted to stay in the program which has been adopted by the Los Angeles Unified School District.¹⁷
- . Families Learning Together, for simultaneous adult and child learning, served families with children in grades K-6. The participation rate was 77% of the total school population. 98% of the parents said they personally learned useful skills and knowledge from the program. 98.5% said they felt more confident in working with their own child at home.¹⁸
- . In the Multilingual School Success Project, a series of HSI family learning activities was developed and translated into Spanish, Vietnamese, Khmer, and Lao for families of children in grades 4-6. The data show a family participation rate of nearly 90 percent across a full semester of activities.¹⁹

BENEFITS TO PARENTS

Epstein analyzed survey responses to see how teacher practices involving parents affected what parents did or said. "Results show that parents whose children's teachers were leaders in parent involvement were more likely than other parents to report: they recognized that the teacher worked hard to interest parents in the instructional program; they received most of their ideas for home involvement from the teachers; they felt that they should help their children at home; they understood more this year than last about what their child was being taught in school."²⁰

Parents in HSI programs have spoken of the impact the activity programs had on their children and on how changes in their children made changes in their own lives:²¹

"The whole family has enjoyed these activities. I think they have helped me in a way more than they have helped my child in that I am developing more patience."

"My child is willing to assume more responsibility and that helps me."

TEACHER ACCEPTANCE

Generally, teachers and administrators were not enthusiastic about parent participation in curriculum development, instruction or school governance. Williams found they did support other forms of parent involvement, such as assisting with homework or tutoring children, but felt that teachers should give parents ideas about how to work together on such activities. Parents expressed interest in taking a more active role than professionals were ready to provide.²²

In 1984, the HSI home activity model was designed for use by the National Education Association in the Teacher-Parent Partnership project. Third grade teachers in 11 different local associations selected for the program volunteered to send weekly activities home to families. All first year sites are interested in continuing, and 12 new sites in 1985 have opted to participate in the project.²³

BENEFITS TO TEACHERS

An effective parent involvement program does what its name says--it involves parents and does not overburden teachers. The evaluation report (Year I) on HSI's multilingual home activity project reported the following findings:²⁴

"For the teachers, the major benefits have been increased parental involvement with their child's school experiences. The teachers report that more parents came to school conferences than would come to school functions and programs, and more parents would contact

the school regarding their child's absence from school or aspects of their child's school work. This finding was very clear for the teachers."

As one teacher said to the evaluator: "This project has helped pull parents into the school. The parents of my kids have been unusually involved this year, not just in coming to school for programs and parent conferences but they're calling more and sending more notes. I also sense they are looking at the homework more than last year."

Parent involvement programs help teachers receive higher ratings from parents. In Maryland, Epstein found: "Parents who participated in involvement programs were more positive about the teacher's interpersonal skills, and rated the teacher higher in overall teaching ability... In other words, teachers who work at parent involvement are considered better teachers than those who remain more isolated from the families of the children they teach."²⁵

BENEFITS TO THE COMMUNITY

Finding ways for schools to establish family support in education is strategic use of scarce public resources. A minor input of school staff time and materials makes major output of parent support possible. Getting help from families means building a stronger educational and political base.

The findings below are significant in that they point to potential trends.

Cost: A study of the cost-effectiveness of the Benton Harbor, Michigan Project HELP indicated that HELP students, at a cost of \$4.31 per student, demonstrated gains equal or exceeding those in Title I "Pull-out Instruction" which cost \$565 per student.²⁶

Morale: Professor Urie Bronfenbrenner, one of the designers of the Head Start program, says: "One of the most important things we see happening is that not only do parents become more effective as parents, but they become more effective as people. It's a matter of higher self-esteem. Once they saw they could do something about their child's education, they saw they could also do something about housing, their community, and their jobs."²⁷

BASIC INVOLVEMENT MODELS

A new parent involvement approach by government, one in keeping with the needs of today's schools and families, is needed. The basic parent involvement models to date are:

Parents as Volunteers

Volunteerism offers extra person power in the classroom. Managed effectively, it can give teachers more teaching time. Volunteerism at its best provides active roles for parents, but volunteers help students in general, not necessarily their own children.

Parents as Receivers of Information about the School

Parent-school communication usually comes in the form of report cards, conferences, and newsletters to keep parents informed. Most of this communication is initiated by the school, and parents play relatively passive roles.

Parents as Policymakers at the School

Relatively few working parents today can participate in Parent Advisory Committees. A major U.S. Department of Education study of parent involvement in ESEA Title I, ESEA Title VII Bilingual Program, Follow Through, and the Emergency School Aid Act found that the advisory council as a model for involvement was not effective.²⁸

Parents Working with Their Own Children at Home

Parent education and training involves teaching parents how to improve their family life and/or how to work with their children. Of all the models identified, this one offers the most substantive research to date and is the most appropriate for widespread involvement of families.

TRANSLATING RESEARCH INTO ACTION

Epstein's studies not only support parent involvement as having positive impact upon achievement and school performance, but also provide insight as to the feasibility of implementing parent involvement programs in the schools.

"Almost all parents believe parent involvement is important, but most parents cannot or do not become involved at school. Over 40% of the mothers in this sample worked full time and 18% worked part time. In contrast, almost all parents were involved at least once in a while in learning activities at home. Over 85% reported that they spent 15 minutes or more helping their child at home when

asked to do so by the teacher, and that they could spend more time if shown how to help."²⁹

Testifying before a Congressional Committee, Epstein stated:

"If teachers had to choose only one policy to stress, these results suggest that the most payoff for the most parents and students will come from teachers involving parents in helping their children in learning activities at home."³⁰

The research and HSI experience suggest that priority attention should be given to developing this mode of participation which directly involves parents in the education of their own child. This is the basic, most fundamentally meaningful form of participation from which other modes can flow. It is often referred to as the "parent-as-tutor" approach. The reasons for this position are twofold:

First, it is the approach which the research outlined at the beginning of the section indicates is most directly linked to improved academic achievement.

The second reason is that this approach offers greater access and opportunity for parent involvement and for sustained participation. Programs which require attendance at meetings or at school activities during the day will necessarily have limited participation. The need to reach out to single parents and to families in which both parents work is a special concern.

Furthermore, the parent-as-tutor approach appeals to the most basic parental motivation for involvement in the first place--the desire to help one's child do better.

Section II

WHAT DO PEOPLE WANT FROM SCHOOLS?

The days when education was a process outside and separate from the family are over. At least four significant, sometimes contradictory, changes are occurring.

1) The school is no longer on a pedestal. Not long ago, it was thought that schools had all the answers. They were the sources of information. People went to school to start learning. Today, it's known that children learn before school and after school as well.

2) The age of experts is increasingly giving way to ideas of self-help. Many people outside of school, including parents, have as much as or more formal education than teachers. This is a major change in education.

3) Information today is coming at everyone at the same time. Teachers learn about current events and new scientific discoveries at the same time everyone else learns about them.

4) Parents are, however, again looking to the schools to deal with problems other than academic, and more in the area of family and social concerns. Working parents are asking schools to address child care needs. Parents of teenagers look to schools for advice about drug and sex issues. Single parents look to schools as one of their only ongoing institutional ties.³¹

The implications of these changes for home-school partnership are that parents and teachers want and need different kinds of support from each other.

This section provides an overview, gleaned from recent polls, of what parents and teachers are saying about their needs. These issues of public concern are useful indicators to policymakers of what's on people's minds. It is important to note that there is no consensus of opinions, but there are trends.

PUBLIC PERSPECTIVES

A review of the Phi Delta Kappa Gallup Polls of Attitudes Toward Education 1969-1984 indicates that while the public is making demands on the schools, it has not definitely withdrawn support from schools or teachers.³² In 1985, 43% of those interviewed gave their schools a grade of A or B.³³

The impression gained from the responses over the years is that neither the general public nor parents want to run the schools personally, but there is clear indication that they want some measure of involvement. A number of the survey questions affect family/school issues.

Childcare

76% of parents feel schools should provide activities for children at school and after school, especially for single and working parent families, rather than have children go home to empty houses.

Preschool And Kindergarten Programs

There is 83% support for early education programs when they are paid for by parents of the children participating in the programs.

Counseling Help for Single Parent Families

86% of the respondents thought it was a good idea to have schools open in the evenings to counsel single parents whose children may be having trouble in school.

What comes across clearly through all the questions is that parents feel responsible for their children. They even feel responsible for the decline in standardized test scores. This sense of strong involvement is probably one of the most hopeful signs for the future.

PARENTS TODAY: THE WIDENING GAP

This is a generation of economically disparate parent groups. The original baby boom children are now parents. They're different from their own parents, says social scientist Arthur Wise, in that mothers are continuing to work, they know more about schools, they have more money and they are generally more sophisticated.³⁴

These are the parents who have searched for and found preschool care for their kids. They know questions to ask. They are willing to pay money for the services they need. They are worried about their children and not sure they are doing the right thing. They can be difficult for school personnel who are not accustomed to working with parents. If necessary, if they can afford it, these parents may turn to private schools to get what they want.

But, this is also the generation of parents who have a growing number of children in poverty. Almost half of all black children live below the government poverty level as do 40% of Hispanic children. School enrollment in 23 of the 25 largest cities in America is now composed of 70% minority students. By the end of the decade, large city schools will serve minority youngsters almost exclusively. More than a third will be non-English speaking students requiring special programs.³⁵

The challenge for schools will be to meet the differing needs of children from rich and poor families, without losing the rich to the private schools and without promoting a new segregation in the schools based on children's background and experience.

One solution for schools is to reach and work with parents, and to provide for the individualization needed by children through programs involving their families at home. Schools can build on the basic caring that all families, rich or poor, have for their children.

PARENT CONCERNS

Probably there always will be some parents who wish the school would do it all, operating 24 hours a day. But the "wish list" of many parents and teachers who have participated in Home and School Institute conferences on Single Parent Families and the Schools and Working Parents and Achieving Children includes changes that are reasonable. They focus on the use of the school as a community institution, serving the needs of the community in new and needed ways.

There was greater concern expressed about the overall need of the family to function effectively than concern about the academic function of the school. Education was discussed in terms which included child care as well as traditional school roles. These were seen as complementary and inseparable. Among the priorities for change were:

- . Inservice training for teachers and administrators in dealing with today's families, including improved communication between home and school;
- . Increased awareness by teachers of the constraints of working single parents, including scheduling of evening meetings and conferences and the need for more positive attitudes about families undergoing separation, divorce and remarriage;
- . An increase in the number of counselors in the schools, especially at the elementary level to deal with changes in today's families;
- . Open enrollment policies in which children could attend schools near parents' work;

- . Need for quality child care. Conferees called for more preschool, before-school and after-school care as well as some type of supervision for older children. The changes included: After-school care in which children did not have to leave the school building; Care for latch-key children by matching them with nearby senior citizens who are at home; Child care courses for parents and survival skill courses for students.
- . Use of schools as facilitators for support systems for parents. Among the suggestions was establishment of peer support groups for single parents and working mothers. Schools were asked to mesh services and supports for families with other organizations and become "a central focus for needed services."³⁶

SCHOOLS AND FAMILY NEEDS

While most child care attention has focused on the preschool years, Professor Edward Zigler in Congressional testimony stated: "We should not lose sight of the fact that about two-thirds of the need for day care is for school age children (6-11) whose parents both work...For this age group, I believe there is a relatively inexpensive solution to the problem. The solution involves parent-school partnerships in which the school buildings, which are already housing these children for most of the day, are used to house them for a few more hours."³⁷

Frustrating to families today is the fact that schools still tend to act as though mothers were home with milk and cookies waiting for children to return no matter what time schools open or shut their doors. One example of lack of planning by schools for the needs of today's families is what happens when schools react to the vagaries of the weather. While safety is an issue when snow and ice cover the ground, schools tend to close even when it gets very hot outside. It is an almost impossible situation for working parents when schools send notices to radio stations in mid-morning after classes have started and expect parents to be home. While not all schools are air-conditioned, it may be feasible to lower the shades for a quiet read-aloud period in which youngsters stay in school. In this way, children remain safe and in a learning environment. Parents are able to finish the day on their jobs without worrying about their children and about their employers. And schools show their concern for family needs.

STUDENT PERSPECTIVES

The National Center for Educational Statistics recently surveyed high school students about the involvement of their parents.³⁸ Students who received mostly A and B grades (all grades were self-reported) indicated a substantially higher parent involvement than students who received C and D grades. Answers given by students with higher grades indicated:

- . Parents almost always know child's whereabouts
- . Child talks with mother or father almost every day
- . Parents attend PTA meetings at least once in a while
- . Mother keeps close track of how well child does in school
- . Father keeps close track of how well child does in school

This can be useful information for policymakers interested in how to support the continuing role of the home with students in the high school years.

TEACHER PERSPECTIVES

The National Education Association, through its Nation-Wide Teacher Opinion Polls, surveys teachers regularly on a variety of issues.³⁹ Among the questions have been some on the relationship between home and school. The responses offer useful insights about what teachers hope for and need.

Student Behavior

Teachers were given a long list of conditions that have been connected with student misbehavior in schools. "To what extent," teachers were asked, "is each factor or condition responsible for whatever misbehavior there is in your school?"

Of all the factors listed, including overcrowded classes, unskilled teachers, and lack of support from principals, the two rated highest by teachers were: "Irresponsible Parents" and "Unsatisfactory Home Conditions."

Teachers were asked: "To help alleviate student misbehavior problems, do you support or oppose the following?"

First on the list of measures to alleviate the problem was: "Keep parents better informed." In 1980, this ranked highest with 97.4 of responses. In 1982, this same response received the highest ranking of them all, 97.7.

Importance of the Home

In 1981, teachers were asked: "Recognizing that both homelife and schools are important, which of the two do you think is more important in determining whether or not a child achieves academically?" Teachers ranked home life at 87.6; school at 12.4. That teachers regard the home as this important could be a rationale or cop-out for the difficulty schools encounter with certain children. But it can also be seen as a recognition of the significance of the home as an educational environment--a recognition that can be mobilized into action.

Home-School Interaction

Teachers were asked in the same poll: "Do you think there needs to be more home-school interaction?" "Yes" was ranked at 93.6 over the 6.4 ranking for "no."

LEARNING FROM PRIVATE SCHOOLS

Much of the appeal of private schools is that they encourage parents to be involved with their children and to be involved in school activities. Some of this occurs because the schools don't have the funds and need parents to paint walls and volunteer in classes. Private schools tend to give parents the impression that they want hands-on parent participation. Public schools, in general, have a hands-off reputation with parents. This is an impression public schools need to change.

Schools must let parents know that their child's school cares about them. Parents want from their public schools the kind of services that private schools have a reputation for providing: small classes, more individualized attention, and closer relationships with teachers.

Public schools can do more of what private schools do--involving students' families in the educational process. Paying attention to families is not only good for public relations or for keeping children in school: it is sound educational practice.

TEACHERS AND PARENTS: SIMILAR PEOPLE

To an extent not perhaps possible before, teachers and parents are caring more about each other, not just for the different roles they play in children's lives, but as fellow human beings with similar problems. No longer is the teacher the town spinster. Today, the teacher, like the parent, is a person who goes dancing, gets married, has babies, needs child care and even gets divorced. Teachers and parents understand each other's needs. "Parent involvement of the 1980's," writes Sharon Kagan of the Yale Bush Center, "is becoming characterized by a new give and take. In the 1980's schools face no mandate to bring parents into the schools and parents must be highly motivated to enter. In so doing, they are reforming the relationship between themselves, schools, and communities."⁴⁰

The traditional ways of responding to and involving families must change along with these changing attitudes and mandates. Parents and teachers can be helped to find involvement strategies that are appropriate and useful today.

Section III

WHAT NEW DIRECTIONS SHOULD GOVERNMENT TAKE?

This is the time when this country could benefit from what has been learned in the last two decades of experimentation and demonstration programs. Among the lessons learned is that families are critical educators, all families have strengths, and the traditional involvement models need to be changed.

Providing support for education without providing for ways to involve families is a partial cure. It's like taking half a penicillin dose to cure an illness. It may start to work but it won't be able to do the complete job.

This section puts into context recent government experience with parent involvement and provides guidelines, through a 20 Question Checklist at the end of the section, to help policymakers frame school-family initiatives appropriate for today.

PERSPECTIVE OF PROMISE

In the last two decades, especially since the renewed emphasis on education, parents individually and as part of community groups have been attempting to reduce their isolation and to have greater involvement with the schools. In view of what is now known about the importance of the family in the education of children, it was a mistake for schools to isolate themselves from the community and to attempt to do it all alone. It was a mistake for parents to believe that schools could be super institutions, able to do it all without "outside" community help.

A major research study by Bloom provided the basis for the federal Head Start and the current preschool movement. It indicated that one-half of all intellectual growth (actually the acquisition of language) takes place before regular school.⁴¹ This came as a revelation to an America grown accustomed to the idea that education was provided by the school.

The focus in many of the early government-sponsored programs was on the child alone. Results showed that when children were taught and parents were not involved, children's IQ gains regressed when the program stopped. Watching this happen in these projects in the 1960's and 1970's convinced researchers that parents needed to be involved in order for children's gains to be sustained.

In view of these findings about the importance of parents, one would expect that programs involving parents in the educational role would have spread across the country. Programs were begun, but they were usually federal demonstration projects, not funded as ongoing local or state school programs. When federal monies left the projects, they were usually not picked up for continuation by local districts. Head Start has been continued, but clearly other programs were not yet seen as important for improving student achievement. In the regular school grades, lack of clarity about the different roles of parents and teachers contributed to the demise of the programs.

The lessons from early, successful parent involvement generally have not been applied. The reasons for this are not absolutely clear, but one may be that parent involvement began to be seen as a way to empower parents politically and less as a way to empower them educationally. Conflict between schools and community groups led to discouragement and abandonment of many programs.

IN SEARCH OF A GOVERNMENT ROLE

To date, the major government directive for parent involvement has been the federal model of Parent Advisory Councils (PAC's). In 1965 beginning with ESEA Title I, grantees receiving federal funds had to agree to set up Advisory Councils, made up of parents and others in the community. This council was to help make policies but primarily to advise and to consent.

Discussion, including heated argument, continues about the federal role in education. There is continuing controversy, for example, about the use of mandates, such as those for PAC's. In an effort to reduce regulation of ESEA Title I, Congress eliminated mandated Advisory Councils in 1981 and called for local education agencies to have policies to assure parental consultation.

The result of this change in the past few years has been a sharp decrease of Parent Advisory Councils, with few, if any, other parent involvement models to take its place.

With the decreased emphasis on mandates, a role for the federal government, on which there is agreement, is the need for federal leadership. In the area of parent involvement, this was given support by Secretary of Education, William Bennett.

Asked if he had to pick one area of education to focus his attention now, Bennett responded that it would be parental involvement. "The whole

question of what can we ask parents to do and then what can parents reasonably expect from the schools--that's going to be a big focus for us."⁴² It should be kept in mind that it has become almost traditional for the heads of the federal education agency to talk about the importance of parent involvement and then not to follow up with either the encouragement or mandates to turn rhetoric into action. Programs outlined in this guide offer ways to back up these words with action.

In the recent sessions of Congress, several bills were introduced that needed but did not have a parent involvement component: They included the National Drug Education Act, the School Facilities Child Care Act, the Secondary School Basic Skills Act, the Gifted and Talented Children's Education Act, the Effective Schools Act, and the American Defense Education Act.

ACTION AT THE STATE LEVEL

Much of the initiative for education reform has returned to the states, which have a large financial stake and the constitutional responsibility for education. Legislation in abundance has been passed in all 50 states. Only a small number of states have provided support for the role of schools with families.

State government initiatives in family-school involvement emerged in 1984 in a few states, among them South Carolina and Connecticut.

In South Carolina, as part of the Governor's New Approach to Educational and Economic Excellence in Action, "Initiative Six calls for creating more effective partnerships between the schools and parents, the community and business."⁴³ Funding is being provided to schools that design and carry out plans implementing the Governor's New Approach.

In Connecticut, Public Act No. 84-209 is "An Act Concerning Programs to Encourage Participation in the Education Process." The local programs are to include provisions for providing parents with opportunities to meet with their children's instructors, develop strategies for parents to assist in the educational process, develop written materials designed to familiarize parents with their child's curriculum and detail activities parents and students may undertake together.⁴⁴

THE LOCAL EDUCATION SCENE

Currently, systematic parent involvement programs are few and far between. Community based school-business partnerships, directed primarily at secondary schools, are attracting attention and headlines. However, parent involvement programs in the children's critically developmental early grades are still rare.

For the most part, local education agencies are now defining parent involvement on their own. While this has the potential to spur local

initiative, it can also prompt local inaction. Even the more traditionally accepted advisory role of parents has been muted.

The Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law compared state and local parent involvement practices under ESEA Title I and ECIA Chapter I before and after 1981. The Committee reported that more than 25% of the districts abandoned parent involvement altogether; another 40% confined it to what the Committee calls "rubber stamping" local decisions. Only 33% of the districts reported substantial consultation with parents.⁴⁵ A similar picture has emerged in another report about the Chapter II Program.⁴⁶

The U.S. Department of Education Office of Planning, Budget and Evaluation reports the number of people receiving training related to advisory councils also has declined sharply.⁴⁷ The training requirement for the parent councils was eliminated in 1981.

CONTINUUM OF GOVERNMENT POLICY

It can be useful to think of a Continuum for Family Involvement, outlined by Van Dien, that provides for a range of action.⁴⁸

Policymakers can use this model to assess not only where they are on the continuum but also to assess what constituents would support.

The Continuum: Increasing Government Regulation

Permission/Encouragement → Program Support/Funding → Mandated Policies

Permission/Encouragement

In this role, government:

- . Serves as a clearinghouse for sharing of information and practices across the country and the state
- . Encourages school districts to include parent involvement in projects submitted for funding

Support Through Programs and Funding

In this role government provides for:

- . Leadership training in school and community involvement for local districts
- . Technical assistance for getting programs started
- . Ongoing monitoring and evaluation of programs in the field
- . Suggestions of model programs for districts to adopt
- . Training for teachers on how to work effectively with today's family

Required Mandates

In this role, government:

- . Mandates specific family involvement objectives for all school districts
- . Requires family involvement teacher training in preservice and inservice certification standards
- . Mandates parent involvement programs for school districts to qualify for funding

THE BAD NEWS AND THE GOOD NEWS

The overall conclusion from the studies and daily experience is that parent involvement is seen as a peripheral activity that is not integrated into the main work of the schools.

Local governments on their own, without staff and funding to learn about promising practices, need help to learn about programs that work and how to do them. This information has not been readily available, and when schools are coping with daily crises, it is hard to think ahead to programs that could prevent those crises.

It is encouraging to learn that individual localities and parent/school needs are not all that different and that they can be served effectively by the same programs. Typically it has been said that parent programs have to be different to serve different local needs. That's almost like saying that network TV programs can't have local appeal. Favorable responses from families in 11 different states to the National Education Association Teacher-Parent Partnership provides strong evidence that across the country parents today respond similarly to programs that address basic family/school needs.⁴⁹ (See Appendix for more details.)

The 20 Question Checklist on the following pages is designed to help policymakers develop programs and policies that work for today's families and schools.

20 QUESTION CHECKLIST: How Does Your Proposed Policy Answer Them?

This checklist of 20 questions has been prepared to help policymakers frame family-school initiatives.

“Yes” answers to the questions that apply to a policy are a key to ensuring successful outcomes. It is useful to remember that the partnership between home and school and the relationship between the school and the community arise from separate rationales of different constituencies. Parents have a personal stake in their own children’s achievement. Business and other groups are concerned with the overall educational base of the community.

Major categories for the questions below are provided to help policymakers key in to specific and often different constituency needs.

FAMILIES • Does the proposed policy . . .	YES	NO	NOT SURE
1. Support and assign educational responsibilities to the family?			
2. Provide families with practical information they need to help educate their children?			
3. Respond to family diversity and differing needs of . . .			
employed mothers?			
non-employed mothers?			
single parent families?			
(custodial and non-custodial parents)			
4. Encourage an active role for fathers?			
5. Encourage family self-help and self-sufficiency?			
6. Provide ways for families to help each other?			
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TEACHERS/SCHOOLS • Does the proposed policy . . .	YES	NO	NOT SURE
1. Support family involvement as an integral and funded part of the school's services?			
2. Provide teachers with training and information to help them work well with families?			
3. Provide for family involvement at all levels of schooling, with appropriate programs for differing student and family needs?			
4. Use school facilities for community needs, including care for children before and after school and during the summer?			
5. Find ways to coordinate teacher/school schedules to work with schedules of today's families?			
6. Emphasize early prevention of learning problems as much or more than later remediation in work with families?			

THIRD PARTIES: BUSINESS AND OTHER COMMUNITY GROUPS • Does the proposed policy . . .	YES	NO	NOT SURE
1. Provide meaningful roles for the private sector?			
2. Connect community agencies in collaborative efforts to reach families?			
3. Involve senior citizens and non-parents in work of the school?			

OVERALL CONSIDERATIONS • Does the proposed policy . . .	YES	NO	NOT SURE
1. Provide for programs that take advantage of what's been learned through research and experience?			
2. Provide support for complementary, reinforcing efforts of schools, families, and community groups?			
3. Include evaluation so that programs can be judged effective or not?			
4. Provide for ways to continue programs judged effective?			
5. Encourage sharing of what has been accomplished?			
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NOTE: The next section, RECOMMENDATIONS, contains examples of programs and policies that address each of the questions on this checklist.

Section IV

WHAT CAN BE DONE? Recommendations for Action: Programs and Policies

The recommendations are categorized in three areas: Family, School, and Community. In the context of partnership, recommendations in one area have impact on the others. They are correlated with the 20 Question Checklist (Section III) in order to provide examples of program and legislative approaches that support the points on the checklist.

The recommendations are designed to be illustrative and to provide direction. Individual communities and schools will develop the specific plans to carry them out.

FAMILY

1/ Support and assign educational responsibilities to the family.

Program development should focus on the methods identified by research as being the most effective. Federal and state education legislation should be amended as necessary to provide for family education programs at the local school level. These programs should emphasize the supportive educational role of the family.

Example: Original ESEA Title I programs were designed with the family/community functioning at best in an advisory capacity. While this may have been a relevant and useful model at the time it was designed, it is no longer the most appropriate involvement method because of changes in family life and the findings of educational research. A redirection of this policy at federal and state levels, to take advantage of the family's educative role is in order as this major legislation is brought up for reauthorization.

- 2/ Provide families with practical information they need to help educate their children.

Polls underscore parents' readiness to learn more about how to help their children.

Example: Information for families should be available in easy-to-read, easy-to-use leaflets from every school and also from places like doctors' offices and supermarkets. Families across the nation have similar needs for similar kinds of information. For example, they want to know how to help their children learn. They do not want to wait until a problem is diagnosed, often years later.

- 3/ Respond to family diversity and differing parent needs.

Policy should identify schooling strategies to respond to the more complex and diverse nature of families and schooling today. While schooling for 4-year-olds may be good for some, it is not necessarily good for all children and families. Centers and home-based care need to be able to co-exist. As for home-schooling, while it has captured headlines, it remains a choice for only a few and does not affect the greater number of families.

Face Up To Child Care Needs: Incentives should be devised for schools and community agencies to help working parents with before-and-after-school care of their children close to the place of employment of the parents. The needs of working mothers and single parents for before-and-after-school child care can no longer be ignored. These needs impact upon the amount of time parents spend with children and the level of parent support for their children's schooling. These concerns for child care and good education are integrated: they are not in conflict.

Example: Some communities have established Workplace Schools with child care as part of the school's program. In Prince Georges' County, Md., Workplace Schools have been incorporated as part of the county's desegregation plan.

Support Concern for the Child by the Non-Custodial Parent: Almost always the more parents are involved with the child, the better. Rather than discouraging this interest of non-custodial divorced parents, schools will want to encourage it.

Example: To address the issue of the added postage and clerical work it takes to send report cards and notices to the non-custodial parents, school boards can allocate the additional funds needed to ensure that all non-custodial parents who want these materials receive them. This is an additional school task, but it may well be one

of the least expensive, most effective ways that schools can build parent involvement.

4/Encourage an active role for fathers.

Policymakers should find ways to encourage fathers to be more involved directly in the care and education of their children and in their children's schooling.

Example: A media campaign can be started showing fathers working with children. These public service messages can appear on TV during football games and other sports broadcasts. This enhances the image of the "macho" man as caregiver to children, not just family provider. Seed money grants can encourage schools and other agencies to provide programs for fathers in their role as educators of their children.

5/Encourage family self-help and self-sufficiency.

Policy should reaffirm strengths in all families. The overwhelming majority of parents, regardless of socio-economic and educational backgrounds, possess basic abilities to help their children achieve.

Example: HSI has employed with success a "non-deficit" approach in its programs for linking families with schools. This approach emphasizes family and child strengths rather than compensation for defects. In special education programs, Individualized Education Plans, IEP's (P.L. 94-142) should include Home Education Plans (HEP's) which families can use at home to help their children learn.

6/Provide ways for families to help each other.

Policymakers should find ways to support the work of parent-to-parent programs. The concept of self-help has been identified in Megatrends.⁵⁰

Example: Incentives can be provided for schools to establish peer-support groups for teen parents, for single and working parents. Groups such as "Parents Without Partners" can be encouraged to organize and hold meetings at the schools and to focus on school-family concerns.

A parent-to-parent approach has at least three special benefits:

It provides fast, needed personal help to families under special stress--attention that might not be readily available from usually overburdened social service systems.

It takes the burden off the school as the focus for all support and help for families. Schools cannot be expected to provide all educational and social services needed by families. Parents

helping each other take on responsibilities for self-help and act as resources to one another.

It helps to restore a sense of community and of friendship from one family to another. This is much missed today when children go to school far from home and parents work many miles away. Parent-to-parent support helps to restore the sense of neighborhood.

TEACHERS/SCHOOLS

- 1/ Support family involvement as an integral and funded part of the school's services.

Schools should recognize the family as a system--a system for teaching and learning. It is not enough to work with the child alone.

Example: Increases in teacher salaries can be linked to expectations that they will work with families, that they will facilitate family learning and collaborative decision making with adults.

Designate Home-School Liaison Workers: Professional or paraprofessional personnel should be funded to coordinate and integrate the efforts of home and school at local school sites.

Example: Policymakers can designate funds for local schools to hire, at least on a half-time basis, home-school liaison workers to connect the work of school and families in the education of children. Training should be provided to these new workers or to reassigned personnel doing this work in such areas as teacher support, family learning, and family outreach. Community agencies can nominate persons to become home-school liaisons.

- 2/ Provide teachers with training and information to help them work well with families.

Teachers should receive needed training and materials to help them work more closely and effectively with today's family. Part of this new and enhanced role for teachers is to facilitate what is learned outside the classroom with what is learned inside. It means working with adults as well as with children.

Example: Experience with HSI School and Family-Community Involvement training for educators indicates that teachers on the job have not been prepared for work with families. Teachers need to learn the research about families as educators, and they need to learn the strategies for reaching and teaching adults. Providing this know-how to new teachers should be expected from and included in current teacher training. Teacher training programs can be

designed so that teachers on the job can participate in half-day sessions to gain these needed skills.

3/ Provide for family involvement at all levels of schooling.

Policy should support different kinds of parent involvement programs for the junior high and high school years. The family involvement of the early grades is not appropriate for the secondary school years. Studies indicate that teens still view their parents as the most influential people in their lives, but communication between teen and parent is often difficult. Programs can be provided to help parents and youngsters communicate, to help parents express care and concern on a more adult-to-adult basis. Such programs have potential for combating the dropout problem caused in part when teens feel that no one cares any more and that their schooling is meaningless.

Example: Programs at the secondary school years, such as the HSI Job Success Begins at Home, address the needs of teens to grow up and of parents to have them grow up--to learn about jobs, mortgages, taxes, and about adult responsibilities in the "real" world.

4/ Use school facilities for community needs.

Policy should support the increased use of school facilities to serve a wide range of community needs. Schools can begin to position themselves to be, not a supplier of all services, but a focus and facilitator of learning for the community.

Example: Separate staffs can be hired to provide before and after school care for youngsters, run summer programs, and involve seniors as caregivers to latchkey children. The possibilities are almost endless.

Carefully articulated, this new focus will not extend the work of the schools. What it does extend is the impact of the school as an important educational resource for old and young, before and after school hours, all year long.

5/ Find ways to coordinate teacher/school schedules to the work schedules of today's families.

Policymakers, especially at the local level, should seek ways to overcome the barriers between home and school caused by conflicting schedules of working parents and teachers.

Example: Teachers and school boards in a number of districts have contracts which allow for parent/teacher conferences to be held in the evenings and at other times when parents can attend. This is done by restructuring teacher time, or by providing substitutes, and by providing child care.

6/ Emphasize early prevention of learning problems.

Policy should focus as much or more on prevention as on remedial programs. Information programs should be developed to increase public awareness about the family, the many roles and services it provides, its basic strengths, the challenges and problems encountered by families today.

Example: The mass media, particularly television, should be utilized to create a better awareness of the family's impact. Materials to help families work with their children should be distributed from supermarkets, churches, gas stations, not just schools alone.

COMMUNITY

1/ Provide meaningful roles for the private sector.

Business should be provided with information and materials to offer support for the family/school relationship. The choices for private employers to help parents are not limited to setting up child care centers.

Example: Policymakers should consider ways to encourage the contributions of business to the work of schools. These go beyond volunteers for the classroom. It could mean giving time to employees to participate in parent/teacher conferences and distributing parenting information that helps employees reduce family and child stress due to work/home conflicts.

2/ Connect community agencies in collaborative efforts to reach families.

Policy should stimulate schools to form collaborative arrangements with other agencies in the community. Attention needs to be given to incentives for teachers to work with mental health agencies, with community groups, with business, with the media, etc.

Example: Seed money grants should be provided to teachers to develop a local school/community educational network. Community groups, such as the NAACP, PTA, and AARP can join with teachers to provide services such as counseling and apprenticeships for potential dropouts.

3/ Involve senior citizens and non-parents.

Older people should be involved with schools, families, and children. Not only have they a lot to offer, but they are greatly needed. They provide helping hands for teachers in class and helping hands to families in special need. The seniors themselves need this constructive role in ongoing community life.

Example: The Older Americans Act provides for employment programs for the elderly to work in community service jobs. RSVP provides for volunteer programs. What is missing in many of these programs is the link connecting seniors to the students' families. In the HSI Senior Corps program, a curriculum was developed specifically to link seniors to families. Field test results indicate that this link is good for everyone involved.

OVERALL CONSIDERATIONS

- 1/ Provide for programs that take advantage of what's been learned through research and experience.

Policy should encourage use of what is already learned and discourage teachers from always creating new programs. Schools need to learn from one another.

Example: Policy should encourage and provide incentives for the use of already developed methods rather than support for new demonstration programs. Now is the time to make use of the programs developed over the last two decades across the country.

- 2/ Provide support for complementary efforts of schools, families, and community groups.

Start With Children's Earliest Years: Policy should support information for parents about their significant educative role from a child's birth on.

Example: Education for successful schooling can begin with in-hospital programs as new parents receive practical tips and information on how they can help their infants develop optimally.

Integrate Education in Family Day Care: Policymakers should support education programs for children in family day care. The majority of early childhood care in this country is being offered in family day care homes: it is recognized that before-school education is vital to the success of children in school.

Example: Educational training for family day care providers can be offered in their own living rooms. This can be done through community cable television, and other local access means. To provide incentives, family day care givers can obtain accreditation for their successful participation in such programs.

- 3/ Include evaluation so that programs can be judged effective or not.

Programs should include funding for evaluation and research in order to overcome the limitations of current knowledge about family involvement and schools.

Example: Current data on the impact of working mothers/single parents on children's achievement are limited not only by the brief number of years in which they have been studied but also by the fact that the data are drawn mainly from studies that were not specifically focused on the direct link between family life and children's school achievement.

There is real need for data that reflect how family life today relates to the achievement of children in school, and what kinds of impact programs have on families and schools today.

4/ Provide for ways to continue programs judged effective.

Policy should support the continuation of useful programs rather than let them be abandoned in favor of "new fashions." The private sector can be involved in helping schools continue effective programs.

Example: Family involvement programs that help to build student basic skills and improve discipline are of interest to business which has a stake in having a local workforce that is literate and employable. Business is increasingly coming to understand education as an investment; schools can build on this by providing business with information about programs needed in order to make this investment.

5/ Encourage sharing of what has been accomplished.

Policy should ensure that school accomplishments, particularly those involving families, are widely disseminated through the media and at local civic and community group meetings. The accomplishments of the system and its students are community accomplishments. They need to be presented in that light--so that everyone feels this sense of success.

Example: Academic departments can learn from sports departments about how to publicize programs. In these academic programs parents are the coaches: they can be interviewed; news releases and features can be sent. The goal is to build community support not only for increased funding to support the school budget or the bond issues, but to build morale--a sense for everyone that "I can do it!"

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The preceding recommendations represent new choices and responsibilities for families and schools. Families today are accustomed to some level of control and decision making over their lives and the lives of their children. Policies, to be effective, must provide such choices and opportunities for families.

Section V

POLICY INTO PRACTICE

Education Infrastructure: Home-School Partnership

Fragments of good parent involvement programs have existed at various times and various places for a number of years. But they come and go, and usually go, especially in times of budget cutbacks. This happens because up to now, their importance in education has not been recognized.

A basic home-school infrastructure has not yet been built. Infrastructures undergird and make possible every complex coming together of people--roads, sewers, bridges, etc. Infrastructure in education means connecting schools more formally to the rest of society--to the family and the home, the outside-of-school environments in which children spend more time than they do in school.

The fact that the recent education reports focused so much on teachers when they are but one cog, albeit important, in the education machinery is evidence of lack of infrastructure in education. Just as good health depends on more than medical care, education depends on more than schooling.

This infrastructure can be put in place fairly quickly: It is not a new level of bureaucracy. It is a connector, taking advantage of what is already there--families and their concern--to ensure that home and school work together.

To take advantage of the family role in education will take some funding. It requires people, information and programs to make things happen. Willing volunteers, even parents, need help and direction. If they didn't, right now across the country there would be all the family support for schooling that is needed. The reality is that wide support from families is latent but it has not been tapped. It needs mobilization. This section provides a mobilization plan.

Basic Design

The plan presented in this section is a basic design: it outlines the essentials needed to conduct a successful home-school program keyed to the educational role of the family. This design has been selected because it can be put down anywhere and work. Yet at the same time, there is room for local individualization and application.

In many ways, it's like the design of an automobile. In order to run, a car needs certain basic inner essentials, but its exterior styling varies. The plan that follows has certain basics that are essential. Individual communities can vary the exterior styling for local needs and purposes and still have good results.

The overall goal of this design is to increase public awareness about the family's impact on learning, to emphasize family and school strengths and to give parents practical things to do to help themselves and to help their children learn better.

PARTNERSHIP FOR EXCELLENCE: THREE PART DESIGN

This program is designed to meet these three basic needs:

- 1) People need information;
- 2) They need support to know how to use it;
- 3) They need to put the information into action.

The school is the key facilitator of this approach. Educators can help families assume appropriate responsibility for children's success in school.

In Part 1, below, the school distributes information to families. In Part 2, the school provides workshops and demonstration programs to illustrate the family's educational role. In Part 3, the school provides home learning strategies, not only reaching out to families but also receiving direct feedback from families on what's happening outside the school walls.

The parts do not duplicate one another: They can be done separately, i.e., Part 3 can be done with or without 1 or 2, etc. But each is reinforcing, in order to maximize impact. They move from "learning about" to "doing." Ideally, they are done together in a coordinated manner.

Examples of how each part works in action are provided briefly below. Further details are in the Appendix.

Part 1. Set the stage with an information campaign on the importance of parents as educators.

National surveys reveal that parents are willing to help their children improve their school work. All parents, mothers at home especially, seek greater status and a sense that society values the important work they are doing in child-rearing. Employed women need tested, time-efficient ways to help their children.

An information campaign helps set the base of understanding and acceptance for future action. It helps ensure the success of school-to-home programs that call upon families to take steps on their own.

Example: A media campaign can begin to educate the public on HOME: A SPECIAL LEARNING PLACE. Signs, slogans, home learning activities through the radio, TV, back-of-the bus signs, messages on grocery bags and on construction fences carry the message with this general theme:
Home + School = Learning.

Part 2. Establish a parent education delivery system.

HSI experience indicates that understanding and acceptance about the family's role in education takes more than information sharing. Bumper stickers with slogans are only a first step.

Teacher Training

To ensure that the concept of families as educators is ongoing and supported through schools, it is vital that training is provided to teachers and administrators on the rationale and the strategies for working with families as partners. Educators need to know the difference between the more traditional kind of involvement where parents are asked to support the school and the new approach which calls on families to collaborate with the school. Educators need to know the research and they need to know how to help parents see themselves as new-style teachers of their children. This training, to date, has not been provided to teachers at either the preservice or inservice level.

Family Centers

To reinforce the family-as-educator concept, families need concrete experiences. Partly, these are needed to build family self-esteem. After so many years of thinking that they cannot "teach" children, families need to have confidence built and to be shown that it indeed is possible for all families to play a realistic role.

One way to illustrate and build family support is to provide family learning center sites. HSI has pioneered in using school space for Family Centers centered on the theme of Home: The Learning Place.

Storefronts, churches and community agencies also can be used. These centers are demonstration rooms showing how household furniture and

neighborhood activities such as a walk or a shopping trip are used for teaching purposes. Centers can be kept open past usual school hours so that working parents can attend.

Part 3. Provide learning activities that families and others can use with children.

Beyond information and illustration comes action--the key component for change. Parents want to help their children. They often, however, feel helpless. They want schools to share strategies and advice, in practical terms, on how they can help their children. Families are already involved before they receive this help. Specific help from the school mobilizes the concern of families and moves it into positive action.

The Home and School Institute has pioneered in developing home learning activities that simultaneously provide reinforcement and practice in an academic subject, teach a useful daily life skill to children and meet the time needs of today's working parents.

These activities are designed to be different from schoolwork and yet to reinforce school skills and behaviors needed for school success. Examples include: No-Nag Times at home when children and parents write notes to each other; Students' Treasure Box where books and things for the next morning are always kept; TV Picks of The Week in which families select special shows to watch and talk about; Chore Charts in which families figure out who does what and when. Sample activities from the NEA/HSI Teacher-Parent Partnership Project are included in the Appendix.

Family response to these activities, sent home weekly from school, is enthusiastic. Each activity is designed to take little time, cost next to no money, and foster parent-child closeness.

Senior citizens, growing in number, more vigorous and healthy in later years than ever before, are an untapped resource for helping families and teachers. The HSI Senior Corps curriculum provides a model for communities to consider. It is a structured basic skills curriculum for seniors to use in working with students with special needs in class and it also provides complementary activities for the students' family to use at home. The family and the senior form a team to help the student overcome learning difficulties.

The strength of this 3 part design is that it is tested. It can work on a modest budget. It is politically attractive and educationally effective.

Teachers and administrators today were not trained in the importance of the educational role of the family. Experience reveals that many programs now being used by teachers, while well intentioned, are keyed to outdated approaches that are not as effective as this approach in reaching families.

PUTTING THE PARTNERSHIP DESIGN INTO ACTION

Two basic questions need to be addressed:

WHAT TASKS NEED TO BE DONE? * HOW MUCH WILL IT COST?

* See Appendix for list of specific tasks to be done at the state and at the local system system and classroom levels to set up a program implementing this partnership design.

Tasks

As part of the educational initiatives sweeping the nation, state departments of education are in an excellent position to help local school districts mobilize parent and community support.

The specific outline presented below for putting the program to work is based on a leadership role for the states and on a service delivery role for the localities. State departments can, if desired, do more of the actual delivery of services to families. This is determined by individual state budget and organization considerations.

Parent involvement tasks should be assigned to trained people specifically working on these tasks and not to people or offices already tackling other assignments.

Parent involvement should be seen as a component to be plugged in to all the tasks of the departments of education, across disciplines and subject matter. In the table of staff organization, parent/community involvement staff should report to the superintendent but be available to all department offices for program advice and materials.

Here are ways in which state departments of education play a critical role in both policy and practice issues:

- . Assist in reorientation of public and professional thinking about the importance of parent-community involvement in the total educational process.
- . Identify and coordinate support for school-family involvement as an integral part of instructional services.
- . Highlight parent involvement programs and practices for statewide attention. Provide ways to share home/school partnership programs at state and regional meetings.
- . Build outreach from schools to community agencies by assisting local education agencies to complete a list of the services available to families through community agencies.

- . Serve as a clearinghouse to promote the increased sharing of information among local education agencies and community agencies within the state.

Costs

At the state level it is recommended that at least one (preferably more) staff person is assigned to the job and office of School and Parent Involvement Coordinator.

This office is a clearinghouse and a source of expertise on the home-school programs, not the designer of programs or materials. It makes available information and support, bringing together localities which want to put programs into action.

On an annual basis, a modest budget for this office would be approximately \$75,000, primarily direct personnel costs. This includes one full-time professional, a secretary and provision of modest, basic technical assistance, training and support for as many school districts as can be accommodated statewide.

At the local school system level, a minimum annual budget is approximately \$40,000, also primarily personnel costs. This includes at least one half-time staff person trained and employed as the local parent-school coordinator, half-time secretary, and sufficient program materials to serve up to 1000 children in a number of school buildings throughout the school year. Both state and local educational agencies, in launching this effort, should plan for a three-year period. This allows time for a program to work and to be evaluated. Each district selects the students to be served, their number, and qualifications for participating in the program. This provides for individualization at the local level. Some sites may choose to serve children with special needs and use federal funds to support the program. Others may choose to provide the program to all families.

Beyond Legislation

As policymakers know, it's not enough to legislate: programs have to follow. They will follow only when those in the field, educators and others, believe the programs can work. The program details in this section and in the Appendix are included to show how these programs can work. Policymakers can share these with educators and others whose support is needed to launch and to continue these programs.

Section VI

WHAT FAMILY DEMOGRAPHICS AFFECT SCHOOLS?

FAMILY CHANGES AND THEIR IMPLICATIONS FOR EDUCATIONAL POLICY

These questions and answers have been specifically compiled to assist policymakers and staffs in addressing family demographic changes and in formulating policy for school/family needs in the near future. Bibliographic references are provided in the Additional Resources section.

Q How Many Mothers Are Employed?

A About 2/3 of married women with children from ages 6-17 were in the labor force in 1984.⁵¹

There is a new "traditional" family, with an employed mother. This is confirmed by the fact that over half of married women with children under six were in the labor force in 1984.⁵²

Q Do Children Of Working Mothers/Two-Parent Households Perform Less Well In School?

A A recent review of studies by the National Academy of Science has concluded that, in general, the school achievement of children of working mothers differs little from that of non-working mothers.⁵³

- . Children's development is influenced by many factors. The mother's employment is only one of these and not necessarily the most important.
- . Employment is not a single uniform condition. It is not experienced in the same way by all parents, and it does not affect all children in the same way.

- . In the National Academy study, the advice given is: "Don't ask if working parents are good or bad for kids because the answer is 'It depends.' It depends on the parents, on the child, on the circumstances, and so forth."⁵⁴

Two recent national studies of elementary and secondary school students suggest a caution. In two-parent white families, children whose mothers were employed had lower achievement than those with non-employed mothers, even after allowing for the influence of various other relevant factors. The size of the effect was directly related to the amount of time mothers worked. These findings show that both single parent families and working mothers can have negative effects on school achievement, but results differ by age, race and family structure. The results also demonstrate the importance of mediating variables such as income and time use.⁵⁵

Q Does The Fact That A Mother Works Limit Her Involvement In Her Child's Education?

A Working poses some limitations on the mother's participation in school activities, but many mothers make significant efforts to maintain close contacts with teachers and schools.⁵⁶ There is a decline in parent-school activities that do not include the child or allow for contact with the child. Given time conflicts, working parents may be less visible and active in school activities during the day.⁵⁷

In light of the available data, it seems unlikely that work status in and of itself accounts for a significant variance in student achievement or level of parent participation in school.

Q Do Working Mothers Spend Less Time With Their Children?

A Studies of time use suggest that working mothers spend almost as much time caring for their children as do unemployed mothers.⁵⁸

The working mother who is "time poor" seems to work harder at maintaining some level of activity involving child and spouse, eliminating personal leisure time instead.⁵⁹

Q Do Workplace Policies Affect The Participation Of Mothers In Education-Related Activities?

A When leave policies are rigid and job stress is high, mothers in dual earner families have lower involvement in their children's education.⁶⁰ Flextime is available to only a small percentage of full-time workers.

Q How Many Single Parent Families Are There?

A One-parent families in the nation now account for 26% of all families with children under 18. That total was 13% in 1970. About 50% of black children live with one parent.⁶¹

Q Is The Overall Intellectual Functioning Of Children Harmed In Single-Parent Homes?

A A recent review of studies done for the National Institute of Education (NIE) shows that when the socio-economic status of families is taken into account, the intelligence of children in one and two parent households is similar. Aptitude and achievement test scores are lower for those from one parent homes, but the differences are not large.⁶² Wilson and Herrnstein writing on the impact of "broken homes" summarizes: "...the safest conclusion is that the central features of family life--a fortunate biological endowment, secure attachments, and consistent discipline--are more important than whether it is a two-parent family, one with a working mother, or one in which corporal punishment is frequently employed."⁶³

Q Do Children From Single-Parent Households Have More Difficulty In School?

A This same review of studies for NIE shows that children from one parent homes do tend to receive lower grades, display more disruptive behavior in school, and have poorer attendance.⁶⁴

Q Which Single Parent Children Do Better In School?

A Sex Differences: Although similar at the time of divorce, girls are much better adjusted than boys one year afterward. Yet girls were not treated much differently from boys by their teachers.⁶⁵ Many studies suggest that the impact of marital discord and divorce on emotional and social adjustment is more pervasive and enduring for boys than for girls.⁶⁶

Age Differences: Children who are very young when their parents divorce fare better psychologically than their older brothers and sisters. Five years after the marriage broke up, younger children in the study appeared to be more depressed than older siblings. But after 10 years, younger children carried fewer memories of stressful events while older children suffered continued damaging memories.⁶⁷

Q Does Being A Single Parent Lessen Home-School Involvement?

A Single parents are similar to other parents in how often they talk with teachers.⁶⁸ Children of one and two parent backgrounds are equally likely to spend time with parents on school work. Across white, black and Hispanic families, over 75% of all mothers were judged to be moderately or highly involved in the education of their children.⁶⁹

For mothers who do not work, there is a difference between white and black families regarding help in school activities. White mothers help in school less when they have no husband at home. But among black mothers, there is little difference.⁷⁰

SCHOOLCHILDREN: CURRENT NUMBERS AND FUTURE PREDICTIONS

Q How Many Schoolchildren Are There Today? What Numbers Can Be Expected In the Near Future?

A In school year 1984-85, there were 39,373,476 children enrolled in American schools.⁷¹

1985 is the first year of the elementary school "bulge" which will really emerge in the next few years. The peak year for elementary school enrollment is set to be 1989-1990. Geography is a factor with the Southwest and Southeast parts of the U.S. experiencing this increased school population the most.⁷²

Enrollments in public elementary schools will increase gradually during the late 1980s as the 5-17 year population rises from 44 million to almost 52.3 million in the year 2000.

Demands for public and private preschool services will continue to rise as will concerns about them. The number of children, ages 0-8, is expected to peak in the next 15 years, and it is likely to flatten out at a level higher than present. Many of these children will need preschool services almost immediately.⁷³

Q Children And Poverty: What Are The Implications For Schooling?

A 21.3% of all children under 18 live in poverty.⁷⁴ These figures use the government-defined poverty line--around \$10,600 for a family of four.

In society as a whole--14.4% of the population lives in poverty. Thirty years ago, before social security, the elderly were the poorest. Today, 12.4% of the elderly live in poverty.⁷⁵

The reasons for the increased numbers of children in poverty today are these:

- . The real value of welfare has not kept up with inflation.
- . There is higher unemployment among young families and minorities.
- . Single-parent families are on the increase and they are poorer than dual income families. The great majority of single-parent households are headed by women. The poverty rate is 40% for single-parent, female-headed families.⁷⁶

Q What Child Care Needs Are Indicated For The Next Decade?

A Supervision of Children Beyond School Hours: Estimates indicate that between 5 and 7 million children aged 13 and under of parents employed full time are without supervision for significant parts of the

day. Exact figures are unavailable since many parents do not reveal if their children are unsupervised.

The ASCD Elementary Curriculum Trend survey reported that only 3 of 100 schools offer child care before the school day begins. Only 6 of 100 offer after-school care.⁷⁷

Preschool Needs: The percentage of 3- and 4-year-olds enrolled in early childhood development programs has almost doubled from 21% in 1970 to 38% in 1983. Increased demand for these programs cannot be attributed solely to more mothers working outside the home. The enrollment rate for 3- and 4-year olds with mothers who are not in the labor force is 32%. The popularity of such programs, says High/Scope Education Research Foundation, may also be due to recent studies that have underscored the favorable long-term effects of high quality preschool programs.⁷⁸

There is very little public funding for preschool programs. The major funding source in the U.S. is the federal government. Yet, Head Start, the most well known federal program, has space only to serve less than 25% of youngsters eligible for it.⁷⁹

State governments are assuming more responsibility for preschool education. State funding, independent of federal funding, is now legislated in 14 states. New or expanded legislation for early childhood development programs is being considered this year in at least 15 other states.⁸⁰

Q Is The Family Still There To Care For And Nurture Children?

A Surprising to many is the fact that 70.5% of the people in this country continue to live in households headed by a married couple.⁸¹

The U.S. has a high divorce rate (higher by far than any other country) but this nation also has a high re-marriage rate. This means that at any point in time, there is a high percentage of the population living in "mom and pop" families.

Recent research has put the family in a more positive light. What has been found is that in most families, adults genuinely struggle to be good parents; children and adolescents feel good about their parents; parent-child relationships are more affectionate and supportive than rejecting or hostile; parents and children like to be with each other; and families are relatively immune to such major crises as abuse, drug dependency, or violence.

In 1983, the Search Institute in Minneapolis completed its national study of 8,000 young adolescents and 10,000 parents. Among its findings were these:

"Most young adolescents experience high levels of parental

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affection and nurture; three-quarters of young adolescents report that there is a lot of love in my family; and 65% feel trusted by their parents.

"Although it is true that peers become more influential between the fifth and ninth grades, and parents become less so, in no grade does the influence of peers outweigh the influence of parents.

"Adults care about being good parents. Only a minority of parents use harsh or extreme methods of punishment. The vast majority worry about how well they are parenting and want programs that will help them improve their parenting skills."⁸²

Section VII

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APPENDIX

SAMPLE HOME LEARNING ACTIVITIES

From the NEA/HSI Teacher-Parent Partnership Project

The Teacher-Parent Partnership project builds upon and strengthens educational bonds among children, parents, and teachers. It consists of specifically formulated activities that all parents can use with their children.

These activities are not designed to help a child pass tomorrow morning's test. They are family activities to help children feel more successful by doing a real-life activity together with a parent or other adult. A child may learn to answer the telephone with more confidence, make a wiser decision about buying clothing or talk with parents about what to watch on TV. Reading, writing and math are part of all of the activities, but they are not workbook exercises. They are real life experiences.

In the course of a semester, classroom teachers send these activities--one each week--home with students. Together, children and their parents complete them. Parents return feedback sheets that indicate they have completed the activity. This interaction increases communication among all participants.

The project is designed to help children become more academically motivated and self-disciplined, to provide a framework for parents to work with their children, and to build stronger community and parental support for teachers and the role of teaching.

In this NEA/HSI project, 140 elementary schools in 10 states were involved. Over 6000 students voluntarily participated. Families at all the sites answered questions about their involvement in the program. Among them were:

Was this activity used in you home?	91% said YES
Did this activity help you spend enjoyable time with your child?	99% said YES
Do you feel your child learned something useful?	98% said YES
Would this activity be helpful to other parents?	99% said YES

Third grade is picked for this project because it is a pivotal, academic developmental year, and also because parent involvement is often down by third grade. Grandparents and others are encouraged to participate in the project. Certificates of achievement are distributed by the local associations to the families who complete the activities.

DEVELOPING DISCIPLINE

"What Show Should We Watch Tonight?" Making TV Work for Your Family

Why Do It?

There is great concern that most children spend too much time watching TV. TV cuts into time that needs to be spent on homework or sports.

This activity encourages thoughtful TV viewing. It helps children to make choices and to practice self-discipline.

Materials Needed

TV guide, pencil, paper, TV set

How To Do It

1. Decide, as a family, to go on a TV "diet" for one week. Together, pick the amount of time you will spend watching each day. (This might be one or two hours a day. Try not to watch more.)
2. Together, using a weekly TV guide, select the shows you will watch. Make a list of your child's and your choices.
3. Post this list where everyone can see it.
4. Have some family games, puzzles, or other activities ready for non-TV hours. Read a book together or play a game. Don't be tempted to turn on the TV. Try to stick to the plan.
5. Give yourselves a reward—a picnic or a special family outing—for sticking to the plan.

More Ideas

Become a TV critic. "I like this show because..." or, "I didn't like this show because..."

Keep a world map and other reference books close at hand. Look up countries and places mentioned on the news.

Helpful Hint

Try to watch TV together as a family. Express your opinions about whether or not you like what you've seen. Sitting together and sharing TV watching is a way to express closeness. Talking about what you see as a family is a way to help children make valuable judgments.

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THINKING AND REASONING

"Yes I Can, No You Can't" *Holding a Family Debate*

Why Do It

Children often disagree with their parents about rules, seeing only their own point of view.

This activity, makes it easier for children to consider both sides of an issue and can help with everyday family arguments.

How To Do It

1. You and your child choose one rule that causes family arguments. It might be about what time the child has to go to bed.

2. Ask your child's opinion of the rule. That opinion might be "Kids should go to bed whenever they want."

3. Ask your child to give at least two reasons for this opinion. These might be, "It's more fun." "I miss the best TV shows when I go to bed early." Listen carefully to the child's point of view.

4. Now ask your child to give two arguments against this point of view. One might be "Parents know how much rest children need." This is called coming up with pro and con arguments. It is an excellent way to help children learn to consider alternatives before making a decision.

5. While your child is working on these pro and con arguments, you do the same. Explain your point of view to each other. What differences are there? What similarities?

More Ideas

Play "What Would You Do If You Were the Parent?" Let the child argue an issue from the point of view of the parent. You argue from the child's point of view.

Hold a family debate. Choose a problem to solve. Divide into teams. One team will be for the issue, the other against. Allow each team the same amount of time. Allow time for closing arguments.

Helpful Hint

Talk over your differing points of view. Did you each have good points? Do you need to change household rules? Children have been known to be very reasonable when they get involved in helping to make family rules.

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SPECIFIC STEPS FOR THE PARTNERSHIP FOR EXCELLENCE DESIGN

At the State Level

- . Prepare a parent involvement statement and a set of clear policies as part of the state educational program. Disseminate these widely.
- . Provide training for key leadership staff in the partnership design programs and methods. These people will serve as trainers for colleagues and local agencies.
- . Prepare program information materials to send to local districts across the state.
- . Set criteria for site selection. Basic to the success of this design is the readiness by local sites to designate personnel (at least one half-time person, support staff plus funding for program materials to be distributed to families)
- . Provide training to selected local site staff on how to implement the program. Show how to use the program and its evaluation components.
- . Provide for site individualization as needed. Discuss how the program builds on current, if any, ongoing parent involvement programs.
- . Provide support and problem solving as needed.

At the Local System Level

- . Prepare and distribute parent involvement statement of local school policies.
- . Build awareness of and provide training to board members and relevant personnel.
- . Focus attention on the role of the superintendent's office to plan and coordinate the home/school program. Fund at least one half-time position along with sufficient funding to provide program materials to all teachers involved in project.
- . Gain public support by sharing news of the services this program will provide.
- . Set up a parent involvement office. Invite parents and business community representatives to serve on a Support Committee.
- . Identify schools to use the program.
- . Participate in one-day team training on how-to's for implementing program. Members in each school "team" can be an administrator, teacher, and parent.

- . Begin program implementation. Tasks include brief on-site teacher training (about two hours) and duplication and distribution of materials. Make connections with business groups for support and possible funding of program. Identify community volunteers, including senior citizens. Work with media to put across the message of the strategic importance of the family in education.

At the Classroom Level (All materials referred to below, drawing on procedures in HSI programs, are provided to teachers.)

Month I

- . Identify a parent or volunteer (if at all possible) to help in the project.
- . Select at least 8 Home Learning Activities from the group provided.
- . Select the dates the activities will be sent home with children. A weekly or bi-weekly schedule is desirable.
- . Record these dates on a Home Activities Calendar. (The Calendar, duplicated and sent home, lets families know when to expect the Home Activities and what materials will be needed.)

Month II

- . Announce and explain the project to students. You may want to organize an initial introductory meeting for parents. At this time duplicate and send home with each child: a) Welcome Letter for Families b) Home Activity Calendar (with dates selected and filled in).
- . Designate a special corner of the classroom for materials related to this project. These are products children may bring in after they have completed the Home Learning Activities.
- . Approximately one week later, send home the first Home Learning Activity with feedback sheet attached. Suggested send-out day is Friday, with return of the Feedback sheet on Monday or Tuesday.
- . Record the Feedback sheets in the Teacher's Log. These data are important in the evaluation of the project and in determining which families will receive Certificates of Achievement at the end of the project. The recording of Feedback sheet data may be delegated to an aide or volunteer.

Months II and III

- . In these weeks, (depending on how the Activities are spaced) send out three additional Home Activities and Feedback Sheets.

Month IV

- . After four activities have been completed, call a sample number of families (or ask an aide or volunteer to do it) to discuss the activities and answer some basic questions. Questions are listed on the Telephone Communication Form provided.
- . Continue sending Home Activities and Feedback Sheets home with children according to the schedule selected.

Month V

- . When all activities have been completed, send home the Family Opinion Survey for parents to complete and return.

Month VI

- . Organize an awards ceremony for participating families. At this time, a Certificate of Achievement is given to families who have successfully completed the program. The family rate of participation is based on feedback sheets returned after each activity. Each school system can determine its own certificate award standards.
- . Upon completion of the entire project, Teacher Opinion Survey and Teacher's Log are completed. Teachers returning these materials receive a letter of commendation recognizing their efforts.

OTHER HSI EDUCATION MATERIALS

Bright Idea

Problem solving for home concerns: communication, health, money and household organization. Grades Pre-K to 6.

Families Learning Together

Simultaneous learning for adults and children in reading and math. Grades K-6.

Get Smart

Problem solving manual for teenage mothers: strategies for young mothers as parents and as people with jobs.

Job Success Begins at Home

Skills and attitudes needed for getting and keeping a job. Grades 4-9.

101 Activities for More Effective School-Community Involvement

Activities for innovative Back-To-School Nights and parent-teacher events. Grades Pre-K to 8.



Senior Corps Program

Complete, coordinated series of reading, math and health learning activities for senior aides working with special needs students and their families. Grades 5-8

Special Solutions

Special help activities for children who need it in math, reading, writing, science and social studies. Grades K-6.

Survival Guide for Busy Parents

Handbook for teaching children at home combined with tips on managing home and job responsibilities. Grades K-6.

Take Homes

Skill building activities for home learning. Grades K,1,2,3.

Three R's Plus

Hundreds of home learning activities concentrating on the basic skills. Grades Pre-K--8.



See example of a complete 3-part activity set from the Senior Corps Program on the following pages.



Health/Home Economics

Healthy Habits

Aide

Offers teaching tips for the senior aide and suggests ways in which the aide also benefits from doing the activity

False Friends

Keeping Away From Alcohol and Tobacco

Here are tips and ideas which will make it easier for you to do the Aide-Student activity.

Tips for Aides

- . Talk about the bad effects of continued use of tobacco.
(Example: Serious lung and heart problems)
- . Discuss bad effects of drinking too much alcohol.
(Examples: Decrease in judgement and self-control; reduced efficiency at work and at school; danger when driving.)
- . Talk about early uses for alcohol and tobacco.
(Examples: Smoking the peace pipe; drinking wine as part of religious rituals)
- . Ask what the student thinks about smoking and drinking. Try to listen to the student's point of view without judging. Don't hesitate to express your opinion. But let the youngster know that you are an understanding and interested friend.

Aide: This Benefits You Too!

When you were younger, little was known about the dangers of alcohol and tobacco. You might have started smoking without knowing what the problems were and how difficult it would be to stop. Learn the latest facts about the dangers of drinking and smoking.

Provides specific activities for the senior aide and the student to do together in the classroom or senior center. It tells what materials are needed and how to do the activity

False Friends

Keeping Away From Alcohol and Tobacco

Here are easy-to-do steps for teaching this activity in an informal way.

Gather These Materials

Pen or pencil, paper

Do Together/Take Turns

- . Together, think of as many reasons as you can for why people drink and smoke.
(Examples: Curiosity, peer pressure, advertising, boredom)
- . Talk about good ways to avoid tobacco and alcohol.
(Examples: Be well informed about drawbacks; find other ways, such as sports, to relieve tension.)
- . Tell each other stories about people you know or heard about who have run into problems because they were drinking.

****Discussion Sparkers: Ask Students***

- . In your opinion, should the rights of non-smokers be considered? Should smoking and non-smoking sections be set aside in all public places?
- . What do you do when you realize that some of your friends are drinking or smoking too much? Do you try to tell them about the dangers?

Health/Home Economics

Healthy Habits

take home

Parent & Student

Provides the take-home learning activity for the student to do at home with parents. Using the same topic, it extends the learning of the classroom activity in a new way.

False Friends

Keeping Away From Alcohol and Tobacco

This home learning activity reinforces what is learned in school. It does this in special ways which do not duplicate school work.

Why Do It

This activity teaches students the potential dangers of drinking and smoking.

Materials Needed

Newspaper, pen or pencil, paper

Do Together/Take Turns

- . Together, try to find an article in the newspaper which tells about an accident or a fire resulting from drinking and smoking. (Or remember an article you read in the paper some time ago.)
- . Tell what you would have done to avoid this accident?
- . Find an ad in the magazine which shows glamorous people drinking or smoking. Do you believe that all the claims an ad makes are true? Talk about the points you don't agree with.

Another Idea

Take a private poll among friends and relatives. Make a list of those who smoke and those who drink socially. Are there more drinkers and smokers than non-drinkers and non-smokers? Did you find anything surprising in your poll?

RELATED HSI PROGRAM POLICY PUBLICATIONS

Between Teacher and Parent: A New Partnership

This handbook, designed for teachers and administrators, focuses on specific help that teachers need in working with parents as adults. Teachers have been trained and experienced in work with children. This handbook, developed with the support of the U.S. Department of Education, provides information, materials, and methods teachers need in order to "shift gears" to address the needs of their children's parents and to enlist them as partners in the education of their children.

Sections include:

New Roles/New Facts about Families and Teachers
What Do Parents Want? How-To's for Building a Trusting Relationship
Parent Involvement in Action: What Every Teacher Can Do

The Contemporary Family and the School: Teacher Training Curriculum

This teacher training program is designed for use by trainers of teachers at both the preservice and inservice levels. It provides content and methods for training teachers to work effectively with today's family.

Most teachers have received little to no training for work with families. Today's families with a majority of employed mothers and a growing number of single parents offer a special challenge. This set of teacher training modules, developed with support from the Exxon Education Foundation, has been designed for use in teacher training courses at institutions of higher education and in training programs on site in school systems across the nation.

Sections include:

Teacher-Parent Partnership Today: Context for Action
The Changing American Family
The Importance of the Family in the Educational Process
New Ways of Helping Families
Realistic Leadership Roles for Teachers and Administrators



HOME and SCHOOL INSTITUTE

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This guide is a longitudinal labor of love and experience. It owes its credibility to the record of work of the Home and School Institute (HSI) which I founded in 1964 with programs for families and for teachers. These have continued and expanded to the present day. I thank the HSI Board for the time given to me to write this guide.

This material was prepared in 1984-85 when I was an Affiliate Faculty Member of the Yale University Bush Center in Child Development and Social Policy. I thank Ed Zigler and Lynn Kagan, who direct this Center, for their support and encouragement in producing this guide.

Special thanks to John Kramer and to The Field Foundation for their support in helping fund the printing and distribution of this guide.

The reviewers of the guide were selected not just because they knew and cared about family involvement, but because they represent different perspectives and different public needs. I know they did a fine job because all had something to say and got me to go back to the drawing board to try to make this a better guide, one that would be even more useful to policymakers.

James Van Dien, a member of the HSI Board and Senior Faculty Member, Government Executive Institute, OFM, read this material again and again with suggestions based on his wide knowledge of the school-community field and his experience in training professionals.

Joan Worden, President of Worden and Co. and a member of the HSI Advisory Council, brought to this material the perspective of the business person who asks that this guide be meaningful to people outside the school walls.

I could go through this text and identify the special and important contributions of each of the reviewers. Space precludes me from doing this. But let it be known that if this guide is helpful, it is because the following people took time to read, and to call, and to say, "Dorothy, have you thought of this..."

Susan Adler, Director
Washington Office
Education Commission of the States

Helene Gerstein
Program Development Specialist
National Education Association

Arnold Fege, Director
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National PTA

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William A. Harrison, Jr.
Senior Program Director, Education
National Conference of State Legislatures

Karabelle Pizzigati
Professional Staff
U.S. House of Representatives Select Committee
on Children, Youth and Families

Special thanks to our small and dedicated HSI staff involved in this project:

Lili Bernant, Senior Associate for Curriculum Development, who went over this manuscript finding incongruities and duplications of thinking in her meticulous and gentle way.

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Kim Mason, Production Assistant, who met every deadline and every requirement with dedication and dependability.

And to my husband, Spencer Rich, and our daughters, Rebecca and Jessica, who have supported my work with the Home and School Institute from the very beginning.

Dorothy Rich

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THE FORGOTTEN FACTOR IN SCHOOL SUCCESS--THE FAMILY

Washington, Oct. 14 -- The Forgotten Factor in School Success -- The Family, a new book pinpointing the family as a "major educational institution," a fact that received scant attention in recent education reports, describes specific programs which can be put into action now by legislators, school board members and administrators.

This guide for policymakers closes the gap between the rhetoric of parent involvement and its translation into practice. It will be released at the Family and Educational Excellence invitational seminar at George Washington University here on October 24.

According to the author of the book, Dr. Dorothy Rich, founder and president of The Home and School Institute (HSI), "the problems facing American education are not problems of the school alone. To be resolved successfully, they must address the relationship of the home and the school. Of the 600 children and youth-related bills in state legislatures last year, most did not include measures to promote family involvement as a strategy to address educational issues."

The Forgotten Factor is an outgrowth of programs developed by HSI over the past 20 years for schools, business, and government; it uses demonstrated research to lay out practical methods and policies to enhance the impact of schooling by involving the family. This guide analyzes five major questions and provides answers and supporting details.

(MORE)

The questions are these: what problems can family involvement solve; why is involving families so important now; what does good family involvement look like; what can schools do; and and what can policymakers do.

Among educational and legislative leaders who have commented on the book and on HSI programs are Mary Futrell, president of the National Education Association; South Carolina Governor Richard Riley; Frank Newman, president of the Education Commission of the States; and Mack J. Spears, president of the National School Boards Association.

The Home and School Institute is a nonprofit educational organization based in Washington which works to link the resources of the school, the home and the community to build children's academic achievement. Dr. Rich consults with school systems and state and local government agencies to develop programs for teacher and parent use.

The Forgotten Factor was produced with the support of the Field Foundation and the Yale University Bush Center in Child Development and Social Policy. In order to reach the widest number of policymakers and other concerned citizens, copies are available at cost for \$5 each from the Home and School Institute, Special Projects Office, 1201 16th St., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.

#

Note to News Media: A table of contents is attached. Review copies of the book are available by calling Worden & Co., 202-783-8440 or the Home and School Institute, 202-466-3633.

The Family and Educational Excellence Seminar will be held at the Marvin Center of the George Washington University from 9 AM to 4 PM on Thursday, October 24. For information on this seminar, also call Worden & Co.

(10/14/85)

(Over)

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The contents provide rationale, research, and supporting details for use in school-family program and legislative initiatives, and in testimony, speeches, and campaign approaches. This guide also can be used as a text for preparing professionals for work with families.

Executive Summary: MAKING NEW CHOICES ABOUT FAMILIES AND SCHOOLS

Section I: WHY IS FAMILY INVOLVEMENT IMPORTANT?

Research Information Base
Basic Involvement Model
Translating Research into Action

Section II: WHAT DO PEOPLE WANT FROM SCHOOLS?

Public, Student, Teacher Perspectives
Families Today: The Widening Gap
Schools and Family Needs

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Three Step Partnership for Excellence Design

Section VI: WHAT FAMILY DEMOGRAPHICS AFFECT SCHOOLS?

Questions and Answers

Section VII: ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

**Appendix: NEA/HSI Sample Home Learning Activities from
TEACHER PARENT PARTNERSHIP PROJECT**

Specific Steps for the Partnership for Excellence Design

Teachers have long sought the support of parents as allies, as partners in educating children. This guide brings together the ingredients of a real teacher-parent partnership for today's families and teachers. It presents an approach that is educationally sound, practical, and do-able.

*Mary Hatwood Futrell, President
National Education Association*

THE FORGOTTEN FACTOR IN SCHOOL SUCCESS—THE FAMILY focuses on a new and needed dimension in the training of teachers, one that can be integrated into existing programs.

*Richard Kunkel, Executive Director
National Council for the
Accreditation of Teacher Education*

As a Governor who has taken the initiative in educational improvement and as a father, I know that family involvement is indispensable. This guide offers practical plans for action, based on long and tested experience, in many states, including South Carolina.

*Governor Richard Riley
South Carolina*

The success of school reform efforts at the state and local levels is closely tied to the question of student motivation, particularly with regard to our work with at-risk youth. This is a sensitive issue for state policymakers. The question of motivation comes out of family structure and community setting. This guide should provide a helpful tool for better understanding the strategies needed to address this problem.

*Frank Newman, President
Education Commission of the States*

A strong home-school team effort is indispensable to achieve the greatest thrust toward educational excellence for every student. All reasonable efforts to enhance this reality are to be encouraged. This book endeavors to describe a set of methods which hold much promise. Local school board members should study its advice carefully and heed it wherever practical.

*Mark J. Spears, President
National School Boards Association*

School administrators will find this guide useful and informative in their work with school boards and with families. It provides the background needed to address the growing number of family-school issues today.

*Gary Marx,
Associate Executive Director
American Association of School
Administrators*

At long last, a parental involvement model short on rhetoric and long on activism. **THE FORGOTTEN FACTOR IN SCHOOL SUCCESS** is a practical, working guide for professionals and non-professionals, for policy makers and practitioners, for families and teachers. The guide presents a no-nonsense approach on how schools can reach out to working mothers and single parents. . . . and is geared for use at the local, state and federal levels. For anyone interested in the survival of both the schools and the home, this is critical, vital reading.

*Arnold Fage, Director
Government Relations
National PTA*